

Gossip

Contents

From International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Gossip[Heb *rākīl*] (Prov. 20:19); AV TALEBEARER; [*dibbā*] (“evil gossip,” Ezk. 36:3); AV INFAMY; NEB COMMON TALK OF MEN; [Gk *psithyrismós*] (2 Cor. 12:20); AV WHISPERINGS; [*psithyrístēs*] (Rom. 1:29); AV, NEB, WHISPERER; [*phlýaros*] (1 Tim. 5:13); AV TATTLER.

In its biblical setting, “gossip” is used to designate the spreading of secrets or rumors, usually for the purpose of slander (which is the translation of *rākīl* in Lev. 19:16; Jer. 6:28; 9:3 [MT 2]). This designation is supported, e.g., by the literal meaning of the term, “whisperer.” According to Prov. 20:19, the one who “goes about gossiping reveals secrets,” and therefore no one should associate with one who “speaks foolishly” (cf. Prov. 11:13, where *rākīl* is translated “talebearer”).

In the NT, Paul placed “gossip” in the midst of two separate lists of evil practices (2 Cor. 12:20; Rom. 1:29). The latter reference is part of a catalog of sins that characterized the pagan world in its opposition to God. Since people did not acknowledge God for what He is, “God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct” (v 28). As a result, they were, among other things, gossips, slanderers, haters of God, and inventors of evil (Rom. 1:29–32). Paul also warned against enrolling younger widows for church ministry and support, since it was quite possible that they would desire to marry again. “Besides that,” said Paul, “they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what

they should not” (1 Tim. 5:13).

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How to Have Victory Over Sins of the Tongue

1. Grow daily in conformity with the Lord Jesus Christ
2. Ask God the Father for provision and protection in this area.
3. Confess this sin each time you are convicted of it.
4. Learn to recognize all of the verbal sins – some are obvious, some are subtle.
5. Keep silent during discussion of a bad situation.
6. Keep silent during discussion of another person.
7. Keep silent.

RULE: Do not pass on derogatory or uncomplimentary information about anyone, unless the Word of God has given you the specific authority and responsibility to do so, and the person you are informing likewise has responsibility in the situation and a need-to-know the information.